

Analysis report: Libya

Libya Leader Says Country Not Fully Liberated

By Danielle DerOhannesian

Following the [announcement](#) October 20, 2012 from Libya's de facto head of state Muhammed Al-Magariief that "The campaign to liberate the country has not been fully completed," Libya continues to witness an increase in clashes in the town of Bani Walid, which was one of the last towns to fall during the revolution and is considered to be a shelter for former regime loyalists and criminal gangs. In what is now the fifth day of clashes, thirteen have been reported dead and 121 wounded, in addition to rumors that Al-Gaddafi's youngest son [Khamis Al-Gaddafi](#) was killed. In response, Egypt is frantically trying to evacuate hundreds of Egyptians stranded in Bani Walid, although it appears to be in vain since the Libyan army informed them they could not [reopen the roads](#) insofar as clashes continue.

The head of the UN Support Mission in Libya, Tarek Mitri, is worried as well and said in a press statement, "*In the interests of national reconciliation and long-term stability of the country, a mediated settlement is urgently needed.*" He also pleaded for all parties involved to abide by international humanitarian principles and to protect civilians. This statement confirms something that much of the world may not understand yet: ideology transcends death. The end of Al-Qaddafi does not signify the end of a movement or sentiment. Troubles in Libya cannot be solved by the removal of a head of state because they are a complex combination of history and culture. It has been one year, and despite progress, there many loyalists to the previous regime remain. Keeping this in mind, the international community must tactfully choose its foreign policy towards Libya; it must be careful not to worsen internal divides in Libya.

The poise with which Al-Magariief is handling the situation is remarkable. He is not only admitting the failing of various government agencies, but also he is using what limited resources the state has. Libya's defense ministry deployed forces to Bani Walid and they are now working towards securing it. Al-Magareif apologized for the bloodshed but also stood behind the decision to send in forces. He said, "This is not targeting a region, a tribe, or unarmed civilians but outlawed men, this is to impose state legitimacy." Having a tone of neutrality is essential, even if it is superficial. Politics is but one part of a transitional period, and the de facto leader must capitalize all potential to be a unifying actor. Completely liberating Libya is on the top of the list for the Libyan government, neighboring states, and international organizations. Ultimately, it is a problem which can only be solved from within, and which will persist into the foreseeable future.